

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, LOS ANGELES

UCLA

MERCED • DAVIS • IRVINE • LOS ANGELES • RIVERSIDE • SAN DIEGO • SAN FRANCISCO



SANTA BARBARA • SANTA CRUZ

Graduate School of Education & Information Studies
 P.O. Box 951521
 Los Angeles, CA 90095-1521

1 December 1995

To The George Foster Peabody Awards Committee:

As the Director of Educational Technology at the UCLA Graduate School of Education and Information Studies, I've taught, written about, and conducted research in the area of children and television for the last twelve years. In part as a result of that experience, I have served as the educational consultant for Where on Earth Is Carmen Sandiego? since the creation of the series.

The primary educational goal of the series is to present world geography information in a manner that is appealing to and comprehensible by 10-12 year-old children. Each episode is designed to take the action to at least two places on our planet and provide the viewers with some information about each place. Additionally, each episode has a secondary topic designed to fit with the narrative, the focus of which may be culture, history, art, music, science, technology, or the like. I review each episode to ensure that the material is consistent with these goals.

The three episode story chosen for submission, "Labyrinth," "Woman of the Year," and "When in Rome," exemplifies our educational goals for the series. The main informational theme of the series, geography, is represented by scenes taking place in Brussels, Belgium, Mammoth Cave, Kentucky, Moscow, Russia, Abidjan, Ivory Coast, and ancient Rome. Within those scenes, the main characters learn something about the cultures of the places, as well as some key scientific information (about bats, keystones, electromagnets and the conductivity of silver) that enables them to pursue their adversary. Additionally, some of the dialogue is presented in the language of the land (Russian, French, Latin, with subtitles), so that the audience will get a sense of the sounds of these languages.

In solving the mystery, the kids deductions are presented in a way that should be clear to most child viewers without seeming either overly didactic or blatantly obvious, and the informational context for the progress of the storyline is relevant without being unduly narrow. I believe that the story has about the right balance of entertainment and information, and the information emerges as a natural part of the progression of the story rather than as a series of interruptions.

I believe that the series in general, and this three-part story in particular, merits high praise as educational fare for children.

Sincerely,

Peter Kovacic, Ph.D.
Director of Educational Technology

Where on Earth is Carmen Sandiego?

About the Show....

On February 5, 1994 *Where on Earth Is Carmen Sandiego?* debuted on the FOX Network. Combining traditional cel animation, computer animation and live action stills and scenes, DIC Enterprises had produced a rather unique educational series.

The series was nominated for 5 Emmys and won once in 1995 for Outstanding Animated Children's Program.

Synopsis....

This FCC-friendly animation features the world famous super-thief Carmen Sandiego, a former agent of the Acme Detective Agency who's gone bad, Carmen circles the globe stealing major cultural and historical artifacts while trying to outwit two teenage super-sleuths, Zack and Ivy.

Zack and Ivy must discover where Carmen will strike next by using clues to find the common thread in her thefts. By doing so, they can attempt to stop Carmen before she can carry out her plan and she can be captured.

40 half-hours

Voices: Rita Moreno (Carmen Sandiego); Scott Menville (Zack); Jennifer Hale (Ivy)

Rating: TV-G

Target: K8-12